

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 22, 1892, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Florence, March 22nd, 1892. My darling Alec:

Your letters written in such an unnatural handwriting were a dreadful shock to me this afternoon. I do not know when I have been so completely upset. I suppose I am tired and more or less nervous about Elsie, and consequently was all ready to be alarmed at anything. I could not accept your explanation as sufficient to account for such loss of power for three days, and I felt so helpless so far from you, unable to do anything for you and what was worse, that you were alone among strangers with no one to take care of you, and to see that you did not do anything to make yourself worse. I supposed of course that by this time the trouble whatever it was would be over, but if it was a sign of real trouble I was sure you would be doing nothing to cure it or heeding the warning, and living carefully. Finally I cabled Dr. Putnam, I think he will seek you out and I hope you will allow him to satisfy himself as to your condition and cable me. Otherwise I must continue to be uneasy. I notice you have never cabled me "well" since your return. When Dr. Baldwin called this P. M. I showed him your letters, and asked his opinion. He has reassured me greatly, thinks that your explanation the correct one, and that I need not be at all troubled. But on my dear, this has shown me how dear you are to me, and how dreadful it is being so far from you and knowing how you need me to take care of you. I want to take the very next steamer home. If I thought Mr. McCurdy could control you in the very least I would send him right over, but I do not think you pay the least attention to him. I really think Mr. Hitz would do more for you than he. I wish I knew what Mr. McCurdy ought to do, I don't want him until I leave, and you do. I feel very selfish keeping him after all, and only did it because I thought you too would prefer his being within reach after this last performance of Elsie's. Of course you are uneasy about Elsie, but the Dr. says there has never been

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any cause for alarm. He declares that if diphtheria is taken in time it need never be worse than Elsie's has been. She has never had a trace of fever, and though she has been kept in bed she has not been in the least sick and she does not seem at all weak, her grip is just as powerful as ever and she shows all her usual strength when she gets up during the change of linen. She does not seem to mind having her throat brushed, and the doctor says she is the best patient he ever had. We are getting covered with glory for the dentist says I am his best patient and that I was so still he thought I was paralyzed. I purchased my glory cheaply, for he did not hurt at all, and I do not believe Elsie suffers either, except that yesterday and today her nose is extremely troublesome. Dr. Baldwin says she is very much better, however.

I sent Daisy away today under charge of Miss Fanny Clark, this is the most infectious time, and I thought I would be happier knowing her out of harm's way, at least as far as this infection is concerned. They have gone to Leghorn where the Misses Clark used to live and where they have many friends. Then Miss Fanny is not strong and needs the change and they have been so very lovely that I wanted to do something for them. Miss Clark just suits me where 3 doing anything is concerned, no fuss only real genuine thoughtfulness. She brought me your letters this afternoon, and was so lovely when she saw how troubled I was. I think only Mamma could have suited me better, she is a thorough lady, and there is nothing more to be said when you have said that.

What will you say when I confess that I went out driving with a pair of horses yesterday! I didn't mean to, I only bargained for one, but when two appeared I couldn't resist them, and off we started Daisy and I, with, yes, don't be alarmed a regular coachman close behind, ready to take the reins if I failed. I didn't but I gave them to him through the worst part of the streets until we got out into the country, and then I had a splendid time. Oh the country is so lovely, not more magnificent of course than what one gets by the hundred mile in the United States, but a hundred times more interesting and attractive by reason of its human interest. Nature unadorned is not to my thinking Nature adorned the most. Give me if you like bits of wild untamed crags, and clusters of dense primeval forests, but border and inlay

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them with trim, well-kept cultivated fields and dot them with pretty cottages or picturesque castles, convents and villages, and give me a history legendary or otherwise for every bold spur or tiny valley.

I shall miss Daisy dreadfully tomorrow, the weather is so simply superb, and she enjoys everything as much as I do. I think she will appreciate her chance of seeing something more of Italy, she wants very much to go to Siena from and I told her if Miss Clark was willing to take her she might go. You saw how interested she is in everything.

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The little Dominican sister thinks I ought to stop writing and go to bed, and I believe you think my letter is long enough. Do you know I always have a feeling that you never half read my letters. However I must thank you for your journal, it came together with your two first letters from Boston, as I told you how disappointed I was when I thought your note the other day was all I was going to get, you can imagine how delighted I was to get the journal after all. I hope we won't have such a storm, especially not at night. I certainly couldn't be as philosophical as you were.

Take good care of yourself please.

Always yours, Mabel.